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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NEAE-00
DHA-02 AID-05 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03
/093 W
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O R 081562Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7127
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA CONVENTION

SUMMARY: THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OPENING OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN (ZOA) NATIONAL CONVENTION IN JERUSALEM ON JULY 7 WERE MAJOR ADDRESSES BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN (SEPTEL), ZOA PRESIDENT JOSEPH STERNSTEIN AND SENATOR ROBERT DOLE (KANSAS). ZOA CHAIRMAN TORCYZNER READ THE WELCOMING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AND AMBASSADOR LEWIS EXTENDED U.S. GREETING TO THE DELEGATES. ASSOCIATED WITH ISRAEL'S LIBERAL PARTY (LIKUD), THE ZOA LEADERSHIP EXPRESSED THE STRONG SUPPORT OF AMERICAN JEWRY FOR ISRAEL AND THE POLICIES OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. THE
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ZOA DELEGATES RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO THE REITERATED THEME OF THE UNSHAKEABLE UNITY OF AMERICAN JEWRY AND ISRAEL, AND APPLAUDED STERNSTEIN'S SHARP VITRIOLIC ATTACK ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S MIDDLE EAST POLICIES. SENATOR DOLE TOOK STRONG PRO-ISRAELI POSITION, ENDORSING BEGIN'S CLAIM TO THE WEST BANK AS LIBERATED TERRITORIES. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S KEYNOTE SPEECH, THE LAST
OF THE EVENING, CALLED ON ARABS TO JOIN ISRAEL IN
A POLITICAL TRUCE BETWEEN NOW AND THE RECONVENING OF
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, EMPHASIZED ISRAEL'S READINESS
TO GO TO GENEVA AFTER OCTOBER 10 WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS
FROM ANY SIDE AND REAFFIRMED THAT ONLY ISRAEL CAN DEFINE
WHAT CONSTITUTES ITS NATIONAL SECURITY. BEGIN RESTATED
WHAT HE CALLED THE NATIONAL CONSENSUS--I.E., NO RETURN
TO THE INDEFENSIBLE 1967 BORDERS AND NO PALESTINAIN
STATE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. HIS SPEECH WAS AN
APPEAL TO KEEP THE DOORS OPEN TO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, AND
WAS DELIBERATELY LOW KEY AND NON-BELLICOSE, ALTHOUGH
FIRM ON ISRAEL'S INTRINSIC REQUIREMENT AND RIGHT TO
PROTECT ITS NATIONAL SECURITY. DETAILS SEPTEL.

2. ZOA PRESIDENT JOSEPH STERNSTEIN DELIEVERED A
BLISTERING ATTACK ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S MIDDLE EAST
POLICIES. SPEAKING FROM A PREPARED TEXT, FIRST IN
HEBREW FOR ISRAELI TELEVISION AND THEN AT EVEN GREATER
LENGTH IN ENGLISH, STERNSTEIN DELIVERED A STRONGLY-
WORDED, VITRIOLIC ACCUSATION AGAINST STATE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIALS, OIL MAGNATES AND HATERS OF ISRAEL WHO HE
SAID WERE ENGAGED IN A DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN TO IMPOSE
AN UNACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ON ISRAEL ON THE
LINES OF THE ROGERS PLAN AND THE BROOKINGS REPORT
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AND TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

3. STERNSTEIN STARTED HIS SPEECH BY EXPRESSING HIS
CONVICTION THAT THE PRESIDENT IS A FRIEND OF ISRAEL
WHO IS SINCERELY SEEKING A TRUE PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL
AND THE ARABS. HE WELCOMED CARTER'S ASSERTION TO
AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS JULY 6 THAT TRUE PEACE MUST
INVOLVE FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. AFTER THIS PRE-
LUDE, HE WENT ON TO SAY THERE WERE A NUMBER OF "GLARING
AND DISTURBING ELEMENTS IN THE PROCEDURE" OF U.S.
MIDDLE EAST POLICY. STATE DEPARTMENT MACHINATIONS,
HE SAID, ARE COUPLED WITH BRANDISHING THE BROOKINGS
REPORT AS THE "TORAH FROM HEAVEN." THE DEPARTMENT'S
ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL EVER SINCE 1948, HE SAID HAS
BEEN ONE OF "ALMOST UNMIXED ANTAGONISM AND OPPOSITION,
SOMETIMES MORE OBVIOUS, OTHER TIMES LATENT, BUT ALAS,
OMNIPRESENT." THERE IS NOW A SPECTRAL RESCUSSITATION
OF THE ROGERS PLAN WHICH WOULD "EMASCULATE" ISRAEL'S
SECURITY AND BE THE FIRST STEP IN THE "DRIVE OF THE
ARABS TO LIQUIDATE THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

4. STERNSTEIN THEN PROVIDED EXAMPLES OF WHAT HE

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CALLED "THE HYPOCRISY AND DOUBLE STANDARD OF THESE DEVEIOUS MACHINATIONS BY SOME AMERICAN OFFICIALS." HE CITED THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S JUNE 27 STATEMENT, THE SPATE OF PRIVATE LEAKS FROM "HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS" ABOUT THEIR RESENTMENT OF STATEMENTS BY BEGIN AND DAYAN AND THE DELIBERATE NON-RESPONSE TO SADAT'S STATEMENT THAT EGYPT WILL NOT CEDE ONE INCH OF TERRITORY AND OTHER ARAB PRECONDITIONS. HE SAID THE U.S. DEMANDS SPECIFICS AND NEW IDEAS FROM ISRAEL WHILE THE ARAB LEADERS ARE PERMITTED TO REMAIN "PARAGONS OF VAGUENESS." HE CHARGED THE ADMINISTRATION WITH BREAKING COMMITMENTS OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS BY REMOVING ISRAEL FROM THE LIST OF PREFERRED
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STATES FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND BY REFUSING TO ALLOW THE SALE OF KFIRS TO SOUTH AMERICA.

5. STERNSTEIN DESCRIBED THE U.S. POSITION AGAINST ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK AS "THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS EJACULATION OF INDIGNATION," SAID ZOA APPROVES OF AND ENDORSES JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND URGED THE ISRAELIS NOT TO BE FEARFUL OF CRITICISM FROM ABROAD. HE ALSO CHARGED THE U.S. WITH IGNORING EGYPTIAN VIOLATIONS OF SINAI II WHILE ENGAGING IN QUICK AND

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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HASTY "SHOOTING FROM THE HIP" WHEN THERE ARE ALLEGATIONS, HOWEVER FALSE, OF ISRAELI INFRACTIONS.

6. STERNSTEN THEN PLEDGED THAT AMERICAN JEWRY WILL REMAIN UNITED BEHIND ISRAEL'S "JUST AND RIGHTEOUS CAUSE," AND SAID THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO DIVIDE AMERICAN JEWRY WILL END IN FAILURE. EVOKING THE IMAGE OF CHAMBERLAIN, HE SAID "THERE WILL NOT BE A MUNICH IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ISRAEL WILL NOT BE ANOTHER CZECHOSLOVAKIA." STERNSTEIN'S SPEECH WAS RECEIVED WITH APPLAUSE AND ENTHUSIASM.

7. SENATOR DOLE, THE NEXT SPEAKER, DEFUSED THE SHARP ATMOSPHERE BY STARTING WITH A SERIES OF QUICK
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POLITICAL JOKES AND PUNS IN HIS USUAL STYLE. HE THEN DELIVERED A STRONG PRO-ISRAELI SPEECH, THE HIGHLIGHT OF WHICH WAS HIS ASSERTION THAT HE FULLY AGREES WITH BEGIN'S DEPICTION OF THE WEST BANK AS LIBERATED TERRITORY, NOT OCCUPIED TERRITORY. "IF ISRAEL WISHES TO RELINQUISH ALL OR PART OF THE WEST BANK BY NEGOTIATIONS, THAT IS HER RIGHT. IT IS NOT HER OBLIGATION...LET US NOT DEFEND ISRAEL'S SO-CALLED CONQUESTS, BUT LET US NOT ALSO DEFEND ARAB CONQUESTS." TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF JERUSALEM, DOLE SAID THAT THE CITY IS HISTORICALLY AND LEGALLY A JEWISH CITY. " IN THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION, WHATEVER ELSE MAY BE NEGOTIABLE, THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL CLEARLY IS NOT." DOLE ALSO SAID THAT A RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS WOULD JEOPARDIZE ISRAEL'S SECURITY. "THE INESCAPABLE TRUGH IS THAT THESE BORDERS LED NOT TO PEACE BUT TO WAR".

8. DOLE SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THE PRESIDENT WAS SINCERELY TRYING TO WORK TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT. ISRAEL AND THE U.S. WERE AND WOULD REMAIN STRONG FRIENDS. THERE MIGHT BE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

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OVER HOW TO PROCEED TO PEACE BUT NOT OVER THE
BASIC OBJECTIVE. UNLIKE STERNSTEIN, DOLE DID NOT
ENGAGE IN ANY CRITICISM OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

9. COMMENT. AS AN ISRAELI RADIO COMMENTATOR EXPRESSED
IT THIS MORNING, THE ZOA CONVENTION HAD THE ATMOSPHERE
OF A HERUT RALLY--EXCEPT IN ENGLISH. THE AUDIENCE
ENDORSED AND GREETED ALL THE SPEECHES WITH ENTHUSIASM
AND RECURRENT APPLAUSE. STERNSTEIN'S SPEECH WAS
THE HARSHEST WE HAVE HEARD ALL YEAR HERE.
EXCEEDING BY FAR IN ITS MILITANT ACCUSATORY TONE
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EVEN THE SHARPEST EDITORIALS OF RIGHTWING ISRAELI
EDITORIAL WRITERS. IT WAS AN EXAMPLE, IN OUR JUDG-
MENT, OF BEING MORE CATHOLIC THAN THE POPE. BEGIN,
IN SHARP CONTRAST, EMPHASIZED ISRAEL'S COMMITMENT
TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND SEEMED GENUINELY TO BE
REACHING OUT TO SADAT AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS--
WITHOUT, OF COURSE, CEDING ANY OF HIS POSITIONS OF
PRINCIPLE. IN SUM, IT WAS AN EVENING WHICH
ILLUSTRATED THE EMOTIONAL INTENSITY OF ISRAEL'S
SUPPORTERS IN THE ZOA, IN GENERAL ON THE CONSERVATIVE
SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. IT SUGGESTS TO US
THE KIND OF BATTLE WHICH MAY LOOM AHEAD BETWEEN
THE ADMINISTRATION AND AT LEAST PORTIONS OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TAGS: PGOV, IS, ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA, ZOA
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